

REMARKS

Claims 4 and 5 have been converted from dependent form into independent form (with some clarifying amendments). This change in form does not narrow or limit the scope of the claims. The independent claim which claims 4 and 5 were formerly dependent upon has not been cancelled. Therefore, the full scope of the doctrine of equivalents should apply to claims 4 and 5 as if they were originally presented in independent form when the application was filed. In view of paragraph 5 of the office action, claims 4 and 5 should be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-3 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by May et al. (US 6,422,882). Claims 1, 7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Ohnuki (US 6,652,298). The examiner is requested to reconsider these rejections.

Claim 1 claims a connector housing comprising a contact-holder module, a frame and a stirrup. The stirrup is configured to couple with a complementary connector. The stirrup has means for holding the module in a locking position for locking the module in the frame.

May et al. discloses a connector arrangement comprising a frame 18, a slider 1 and a complementary part 12. Please note that Fig. 3 merely shows two different views of the same complementary part 12. In addition, please note that Fig. 4 merely shows the frame 18 and slider 1 assembly which can be used with either the first embodiment of the complementary part 12 (shown at the top of Fig. 4) or an alternative second

embodiment of the complementary part 12 (shown at the bottom of Fig. 4). The slider 1 is not able to engage a complementary connector (not shown). The slider 1 merely engages the module(s) 12. "14" shown at the bottom of Fig. 4 is not a complementary connector has the examiner has stated; it is an alternate embodiment of the module 12 shown at the top of Fig. 4 (see column 2, lines 61-64). Claim 1, on the other hand, claims that the stirrup is configured to couple with a complementary connector, **and** that the stirrup has means for holding the module in a locking position for locking the module in the frame. Although May et al. discloses that the slider 1 can lock the module(s) 12 in the frame 18, there is no disclosure or suggestion of the slider 1 being configured to couple to a complementary connector (not shown). Thus, May et al. does not "anticipate" the features of claim 1. Nor is there any suggestion of the slider 1 in May et al. being configured to couple with anything other than the frame 18 and the module(s) 12. Thus, there is no suggestion of the features of claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable over May et al.

Ohnuki discloses casing 6, engaging plates 9, plug body 8, and complementary connector 5. The examiner (referencing column 10, lines 21-31 and column 11, lines 19-26 of Ohnuki) stated that engaging plates 9 has means 33, 34 for holding the module 8 in a position for locking the module 8 in the frame 6. This is incorrect. The sections of Ohnuki noted by the examiner do not teach that portions of the engaging plate 9 provide means for holding the plug body 8 in a position for locking the plug body 8 in the casing 6. The plug body 8 is locked in the

casing 6 by the guide rails 26, grooves 8a, stopping protrusion 8b, and stopping hole 30 (see column 7, lines 58-67). Claim 1, on the other hand, claims that the stirrup has means for holding the module in a locking position for locking the module in the frame. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Ohnuki of the engaging plates 9 having means for holding the plug body 8 in the casing. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable over Ohnuki.

Though the claims dependent upon claim 1 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 1. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Claim 8 has been converted from dependent form into independent form (with some clarifying amendments). This change in form does not narrow or limit the scope of the claim from claim 8 as originally filed. Claim 8 claims that the module and the stirrup comprise complementary means for preventing a maneuvering of the stirrup when the module is not in the locking position.

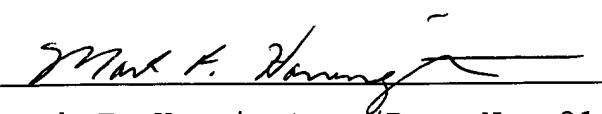
May et al. does not disclose or suggest that the module(s) 12 and the slider 1 have complementary means for preventing a maneuvering of the slider 1 when the module(s) 12 are not in a locking position. May et al. merely discloses that the slider 1 has front faces 5 which engage **the shoulder 7 on the frame 18**; not on the module(s) 12. There is no disclosure or suggestion of the shoulder 7 being on the module(s) 12. Thus, May et al. does not disclose or suggest a module and a stirrup

which comprise complementary means for preventing a maneuvering of the stirrup when the module is not in the locking position as recited in claim 8. There is no disclosure or suggestion of **the module(s) 12** having a means for preventing a maneuvering of the stirrup when the module is not in the locking position. The examiner is requested to withdraw his rejection regarding claim 8. Claim 8 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claims 10-18 have been added above to claim the features recited therein.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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